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¶1. Lead Stories

Primetime newscasts and all newspapers led with stories on car maker GMQs decision to keep Opel, highlighting in very lengthy reports that German politicians and Opel employees are outraged at GM. Lead headlines: QBerlin is outraged at General MotorsQ (Frankfurter Allgemeine), QAmericans snub MerkelQ (Tagesspiegel), QGeneral Motors blackmails BerlinQ (FT Deutschland), QGeneral Motors blackmails Opel employeesQ (Sueddeutsche), QAmericans put everyone of the scent. OpelQnothing but a cheat!Q (Bild), QGM cuts 10,000 Opel jobs (Berliner Zeitung). Most papers carried several pages on GM and Opel. Editorials focused on OpelQs situation.

¶2. GMQs U-turn

In a front-page editorial, Tagesspiegel (11/5) described GMQs decision as a setback for Chancellor Merkel after her triumph in the U.S. Congress: QIt is really tragic. On the day of her greatest triumph she was most humiliatedQnot anywhere, but in the U.S., the land of her dreams This is an unprecedented affront and disaster for U.S.-German relations.

Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/5) carried a sober front-page editorial: QThe anger in Germany is overwhelming, and the Russian leadership also feels duped. The German federal and regional governments rescue plan has failed because they were not the dealQs driving forces. They have embarrassed themselves.

In a second front-page editorial, Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/5) added: QThis is particularly embarrassing for Chancellor Merkel who repeatedly urged GM to sell Opel to Magna. She interfered in the plans of an individual company. This is not what politicians should do in a free market economy, not even in an election campaign.. For taxpayers, the U-turn is good news, but part of the employees will lose much.

Under the headline QThe Opel disaster,Q Sueddeutsche (11/5) editorialized: QNow when rescuing Opel and the four plants in Germany has become critical, this time around under the auspices of GM, the new government is also under threat of being blackmailed. Whenever necessary, GM can threaten to close plants. So the tug-of-war to rescue Opel will go on, and the danger that the government will make a mistake is great.

Mass-tabloid Bild (11/5) remarked: QThe behavior of managers is a slap in the face of all those who have been involved in the rescue efforts. GM further damages Opel in the midst of a sales crisis. After this decision, there are only losers.

Berliner Zeitung (11/5) commented: QYes, the sudden U-turn without preceding consultations is an affront to Germans. The fact that the decision was made at a time when the Chancellor expressed gratitude to Americans for their achievements in the process that led to German unity, makes it even worse. However, it is wrong to speak of a defeat for Merkel. The recent measures taken by the government under the participation of the SPD have rescued the company, which would otherwise have faced bankruptcy.

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FT Deutschland (11/5) editorialized on its front page: QThose who hoped that the game of poker was over with GMQs decision were disappointed only hours later. Another round is just beginning. For Germany, this is bad news, since the German government has demonstrated in previous rounds that it is not good at poker. It was a particularly bad mistake for the government to make itself prone to blackmail.

13. Chancellor Merkel in the U.S.

ARD-TVQs Tagsthemen (11/3) commented: QRegardless of the fact that standing ovations and occasional cheers are part of CongressQs standard repertoire, this time they have shown real appreciation. For many American politicians, Angela Merkel is the go to person in Europe. There were many signs indicating that the red carpet was rolled out for her. It must be clearly said: Angela Merkel has hit the right tone. She has spoken about her personal experience, and for many Americans she is the embodied victory over Communism. Americans have a very emotional relation to the Wall. It was very smart of Merkel to use the idea of overcoming walls throughout her speech. It was astonishing how many Congressmen stood up and applauded her statements on climate protection, given that many brakemen are sitting in both houses of the Congress.

ZDF-TVQs Heute (11/3) noted: QThis is a style America appreciates very much. Merkel has professed the American dream. She has reminded many Americans that Germany remains an important and particularly grateful ally. However, there will also be critical questions. People will want to know what was meant when the Chancellor assured Congress that Germany will share in the responsibility for Afghanistan. Not everybody will applaud tougher climate protection measures. Awareness of the need for climate protection is still in its nappies. However, in general, this was a complex and personal speech America appreciates.

Under the headline Qode to freedom,Q Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/4) remarked in a front-page editorial: QWas this really the German Chancellor who spoke there, the sober Angela Merkel who is not exactly known as a magician of words? On Capitol Hill in Washington, a politician emerged who we have not seen before. She was the first German Chancellor who was allowed to address both houses of the Congress. She said thanks for the honor by expressing great commitment to freedom, the highest virtue of AmericansQand Germans. She said that nothing stimulates her more than the power

of freedom and the American Dream. Such speeches do not remove the differences of interests that even exist in the closest alliance, but it helps in a dispute to realize that the agreements on the basics outweigh the differences by far. Unlike her predecessor Schroeder, she has no doubt that NATO remains the pillar of Germany's security policy. Given this ode to freedom, she must know that she could not fall short of it in the Bundestag and among the German public.

Sueddeutsche (11/4) opined: QThe East German daughter of a pastor still sounds more convincing than West Germans when she says thanks to Americans for their efforts as a western guard in the Cold War as well as for their support of the historic opportunity for Germany's reunification. America was right to trust Germany's democratic maturity.

Berliner Zeitung (11/4) argued: QAngela Merkel delivered a remarkable speech to the U.S. Congress. It was a smart speech that linked her personal story in East Germany with the call to tear down the walls of the 21st century, such as the walls that prevent climate protection. This was the only passage where she demanded something from the U.S.

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Under the headline QMerkel's freedom speech,Q Die Welt (11/4) said in a front-page editorial: QSince 1989, Germany represents the model of successful U.S. policyQpeaceful introduction of democracy, integration into the western system and a woman as a leader. The latter is music of the future for the U.S. Many in the U.S. appreciate Merkel. Such speeches open doors and secure political influence. U.S. presidents can fail in the Congress. It is good for Germany when a chancellor is successful there.

FT Deutschland (11/4) commented: QAngela Merkel delivered the kind of speech to the U.S. Congress that Americans love: personal, with pathos and flattery. She told the story of a girl in East Germany who was dreaming of freedom and the land of opportunities. The Chancellor smartly connected her personal anecdotes, historic references and current topics, such as the international approach to the nuclear dispute with Iran and the upcoming climate conference in Copenhagen. On the foreign stage, Merkel's policy is certainly beneficial. In general, Merkel left a good impression on most Congressmen. She met the expectations.

Tagesspiegel (11/4) noted in a front-page editorial: QIn front of both house of the Congress, Angela Merkel has probably delivered the speech of her life. A speech of gratitude to the American people, a commitment to the unbreakable alliance between Europe and the U.S. on the basis of common values, and the speech of a world leader who speaks on behalf of a country that wants to return to the world the assistance it received in recent decades. The speech was marked by the signal that Germany bears its responsibility for the world. No country has promoted German unity like the United States. No other western ally expressed so much confidence in the maturity of Germans and their political representatives. Afghanistan could now become the first test of this renewed loyalty.

¶4. President Obama Q One year after the elections

In a lengthy editorial under the headline QPresident on probation, Sueddeutsche (11/5) noted: QTo the day it is one year ago that a new time was to start for America and the world. The honeymoon between the American people and Obama is over. Conservatives believe they were right when they described him as a fraud. The left is disappointed. In fact, Obama has not anything specific to showQnot yet. One year later it is clear that Obama is working very hard. It is still too early to come to a conclusion on his presidency. But in one year, when a new Congress is elected, Barack Obama must have delivered something so we can see where we are going. Otherwise the people will punish him, and so would history.

Under the headline QWarning signal for Obama,Q Sueddeutsche (11/4) carried an editorial: QThe message is clear: Obama and his Democrats must finally implement the reforms they promised a year ago, and

thus get the country moving. Otherwise, next year's results, when 36 governors and parts of the Congress are up for election, will be bad for the Democrats.

Die Welt (11/4) headlined its editorial "Slap in Obama's face," and added: "The initial glamour has not gone, but there are a few dents."

Clear victories for the Republicans show the limits of Obama's success strategy. Skepticism of the President has grown in the country. The midterm elections in 2010 will be the real test. This is the date Obama is focusing on. The slap in his face in Virginia and New Jersey will have an impact on his policies.

Berliner Zeitung (11/4) devoted most of page two to the first anniversary of the U.S. elections, highlighting: "Today a year ago the U.S. elected their first black President. The office has changed Barack Obama. The man who conveyed so much hope has problems to implement his ideas. Is this still change we can believe in?" FT Deutschland (11/4) wrote: "Prior to his election on

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November 4, 2008, U.S. President Obama made many promises. Since then he launched many reforms—but it remains uncertain how successful they are." Frankfurter Rundschau (11/4) headlined "The magician lost his magic," and highlighted: "One year after the elections, Obama is fighting against exaggerated expectations."

15. Lisbon Treaty

Under the headline "New Beginning in Europe," Berliner Zeitung (11/4) editorialized: "The tense debates about the personnel for the new offices conceal the fact that the posts are only vaguely defined. What is the future council president supposed to do? What are his competences? Will he be an internal coordinator, a better bureaucrat or somebody who can set political priorities? If the new beginning is supposed to work, Europe's state and government leaders must quickly answer these questions. They should first of all determine how strong and independent the new Lisbon Europe should be."

Sueddeutsche (11/4) headlined "Hectic search for Europe's foreign minister," and added: "In Brussels, particularly two names are being discussed: David Miliband and Massimo D'Alema. The most promising candidate is David Miliband." The editorial headlined "the end of the war of nerves," and noted "the time has come when EU's 27 members can compete together with large powers and emerging countries."

Die Welt (11/4) commented: "The end of a painfully long ratification process came quicker than expected. This treaty does not repair all of Europe's flaws but it creates democratic and efficient structures. The most important thing is, however, that Europe can now stop talking about structures as if the future of the continent depends on them."

16. CIA v Italian Court

Several papers reported that CIA agents were convicted as kidnappers by an Italian court (Berliner Zeitung). Sueddeutsche Zeitung (11/5) editorialized under the headline "Victory of Justice": "There are still judges in Italy. The verdict convicting 23 Americans who kidnapped a radical Imam six years ago in Mairland and deported him to Egypt is a victory of justice. Five years in prison is appropriate, although the verdict is only of symbolic value, as the agents, sentenced in absentia, are not expected to return to Italy. The verdict is a blow to the former government under President Bush, which sacrificed the rule of law and betrayed the values of the West in the fight against a suspected evil. The verdict makes clear that Europe must not be made the backyard of U.S. intelligence services."

17. Climate Change

Weekly Die Zeit (11/5) wrote in a lengthy article: "We are outraged that the political global elite and particularly the U.S. superpower are about to postpone humankind's number one problem for an indefinite time. Who is to blame? Particularly the United States."

America is the greatest emitter among the industrial countries, the greatest brakeman on climate protection, and the leader everybody is waiting for. However, despite Obama's efforts, America will have nothing to offer in Copenhagen. Too big is the resistance in the U.S. Congress and by lobbyists. This vicious circle must be broken. It is possible to exert pressure on the U.S. If Europe and the most important developing countries reach an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen without the U.S., it could create a maelstrom the U.S. Congress can no longer resist. There is a storm in America over climate protection and the coming months will decide in which direction America is moving.

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Berliner Zeitung (11/5) carried a page on climate protection, saying: QIn Barcelona, the last preparations have been made for the big post-Kyoto conference in Copenhagen in December. The omens could not be worse because the members of the global community are completely at odds with one another.Q The paper states: QThe U.S. government is rhetorically withdrawing from climate protection.

18. Iranian Protests

Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/5) commented: QThis time around, the celebrations of the criminal kidnappers got out of control. Apart from the official demonstrations, there were violent clashes between the security apparatus and the opposition forces, which have not given in since the controversial presidential elections last summer.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is seething with unrest.

Die Welt (11/5) editorialized: QFor the rulers in Tehran, it is bitter irony that the opposition turned the QholidayQ that marks the Islamic Revolution more than many other days, upside down. After the redefinition of the anti-Israeli Al Quds day, it was the second time that the opposition exploited such days for its own purposes. Reformers were similarly clever when they picked green, the color of the prophet, as the symbolic color of their movement. This demonstrates that the opposition is persistently pursuing its goals.

It does not currently have the power to seriously threaten the regime, but neither is the theocracy completely managing to quell the protest. There are two reasons: the leaders are divided and the moral conviction of the protesters has grown. Even hardliners realize that excessive violence against protesters undermines the legitimacy of the regime. The history of the fall of the Wall shows what consequences can occur when the moral foundation of a regime is steadily eroded.

Berliner Zeitung (11/5) analyzed: QThere is no credibility or consensus any more. The rifts in Iranian society are becoming larger; they are sharply dividing Iranian youth from the theocracy. Ahmadinejad's government hardly has the power to make decisions. This has recently become clear in the nuclear dispute. Ahmadinejad expressed willingness to reach a compromise with the West to enrich uranium abroad, but conservative parliamentarians, representatives of students and even opposition leaders accused Ahmadinejad of going down on his knees before America. Obviously not every reformer favors normal relations with the United States and certainly not at any cost. Conservatives and opposition supporters are united in their desire for improved relations with the U.S. They want mutual respect and transparent meetings. U.S. President Obama promised this when he commemorated the events of 30 years ago. Whether he can keep this promise depends not just on the attitude of the Iranian government towards the nuclear dispute and the democratic movement, but also on the role played by the U.S. Congress and electorate. The takeover of the Embassy was a humiliation the majority of Americans have psychologically not yet overcome.

19. Afghanistan

Several papers carried factual reports noting that an QAfghan police officer killed five British trainersQ (Berliner Zeitung). There are no editorials on this incident, but Damir Fras of Berliner Zeitung (11/5), who has recently been on a US-NATO tour in Afghanistan, remarked in an editorial: QGermany must debate whether to deploy the Bundeswehr in the heavily embattled south of the country. There is

no reason to avoid this debate. Germany's allies have been making this request for a long time. And Germans have the right to get a response.

MURPHY